

Title: Ch. 1: Iron Will

Author: Magellan

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While I may not be the epic hero whose name is known throughout the land, I am an able seaman, and like any sailor, in any tavern, I have my share of tales.

My tale begins, appropriately enough, in a Tavern in Trinsic. I was a man of the sea, yet I was without a ship of my own, nor was there any Captain looking to hire an able seaman at the time.

So, I spent my time poring over old treasure maps, Thinking perhaps to explore a bit of the countryside and take a brief respite from the ardors of the sea. I had settled in at my usual table by the hearth at the Keg and Anchor, and ordered another mug from the Tavernkeeper, when a voice over my shoulder said, "This one is on me."

I turned and found myself looking up at a smiling man of middle years, one who I had known for some time as a competent and trustworthy swordsman.

"Lanavar!" said I, rising to greet him. "It's been a while. How are you, old friend?"

He shook his cloak out, laying it to dry by the fire. "I fare well enough, I suppose," he replied. "I am, in fact, about to embark on a new endeavor. In fact, you may be Interested."

He took a drink from his mug, then said, "I have left the Alliance."

"Left! but why?" We both were members of an enclave known as The New Alliance, a group of friendly and helpful people who strove hard to make newcomers feel welcome. I was, after a fashion, a newcomer to this land myself, having spent some years in Orcish captivity. Lanavar had left home long ago to fight in foreign wars, and was in many ways as new to his homeland as I was.

In answer to my question, he said, "Politics, I suppose. The Alliance is full of good people, but I feel a bit..." he paused, searching for the words, "...out of place, would be the best way to put it."

I myself was not dissatisfied with the Alliance, Though I did spend much of my time apart, pursuing my own ventures. "What will you do now?" I asked.

He leaned forward, and said quietly, "I am reviving the Iron Will."

Lanavar had told a few tales, over the many months I had known him, of the Warrior's Guild he had once belonged to, known as Iron Will. He had risen to some prominence within its ranks, but shortly after he left for other lands, the guild dissolved. He was oft nostalgic for the "old days of thunder and glory," as he liked to put it. Now, he spoke of returning to that glory, and was offering me a place.

"I am a warrior by nature," he said, "this you know. But I do not wish

to fight for the sake of battle alone; I want to change the world."

He told me briefly of his plans: To recruit and train a large fighting force, capable of Taming the wildest corners of this land, and fight to purge Felucca of the brigands and scoundrels who preyed on innocents, and to challenge great guilds on the field of battle for honor, glory, and wealth.

"I could use someone like you, Magellan," he continued. "Your naval experience could prove valuable, for I plan on dealing with the Pirates that plague the waterways, and provide protection for merchants, explorers, and miners along the coast."

"An interesting concept," I said, not yet committing myself. "I wouldn't mind Captaining a capable crew. It has been a while."

"I want you to be more than just Captain of a ship," he said. "I want you to command an entire fleet...Admiral."

Perhaps I am a bit vain, But being the Admiral, Building a naval force from scratch and developing it as I saw fit, had a certain appeal.

We spoke more on the matter long into the night, and I found his fervor for his new project to be rather appealing. Many a man speaks of glory and fame, and making a name for himself, but few thought out their plan to the extent that Lanavar had.

"Most of the structure of our Guild will be Identical to the original Iron Will," he replied. "I

will be making some improvements over time, and even though it won't happen overnight, We can build something worthwhile here."

I finally agreed, seeing that his zeal was tempered by reason and patience. The next morning, we set out to introduce me to the others who had joined him, and I left that place an admiral awaiting a fleet.

Lan was experienced with group combat, and resolved to test his small band's abilities as a whole, so we agreed to travel to the Entrance to the dungeon of Doom, and make a brief sortie into its depths.

There were six of us present for this hunt: Myself, Lanavar, Talis Eraphen the Mystic, Racelin, Isabella, and the Lady Love.

Talis led us into the depths, and, Mystic or not, he was one of the most formidable warriors I have ever met. He seemed always to be everywhere at once, keeping our forces marshalled together, and when one of us would fall, he used his not insignificant talents to restore them to life. I followed in drogue, doing my best to heal others, and joining in the fray as much as possible. Lady Love dove into the fiercest battles, slaughtering Liches with abandon, and Lanavar was right on her heels, with Isabella and Racelin flanking out to the left and right. We created quite a row as we hammered through the

undead, putting many of them into a more permanent type of death. a large band of liches launched a counter attack, and I found myself cutting down three dead sailors who were risen to serve these Liches. I was struck from behind by powerful magics, and turned to cast a little death at that Lich. I faced not one, but three of the sinister creatures!

I desperately cast out a spirit of blades, and as it formed from the ether, the Liches struck in tandem. As darkness enveloped me, I saw Lan rush forward and plunge his sword to the hilt into the central Lich, while my summoned blade spirit dispatched the one to the right, and Isabella and Racelin finished the third. I do not know how long I waited in limbo, but from my ghostly perspective I saw the entire battle.

Racelin fell to the sword of a skeletal knight, and was quickly revived by Talis. as the battle neared the end, Talis walked over to where My body lay and said,

"Rise, young seafarer, our time to fight is now!"

A nimbus of blue-white light surrounded me, and I found myself back amongst the living. I quickly gathered my belongings and returned to battle.

I knelt over the corpse of one of the zombies who had appeared to be a sailor while he yet lived, and quickly recited the Sailor's Lament. among his belongings was a Tricorne Hat, and I noticed a faint glow emanating from it. I took the hat and what

little gold he had on him.

Four zombies shuffled towards me. I was low on the reagents I needed to cast magical spells, but I found I had just enough sulfurous ash to cast a field of fire between them and me. I quickly donned the hat I had just acquired, and cast. To my surprise, I still had sulfurous ash! The hat apparently was enchanted to occasionally replace the need for reagents.

"Time to go," Talis said, and summoned a portal leading us safely out of the dungeon.

"Well done, Magellan! I am glad you stayed with us 'til the end," Lan said.

"Aye," Talis agreed.

"You are a fitting addition to iron will, young seafarer." With that he bowed. "By your leave, Lanavar, I must depart." He turned one last time to me, gave the briefest of salutes, and said, "Fare ye well, Admiral," and was gone.

We drank well that night, and laid out plans for the future...